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Senate General Government Committee
SB 213 Sponsor Testimony
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Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 213, which would create a licensure for traffic camera dealers who wish to operate and issue speeding tickets in Ohio.

Past General Assemblies have seen similar bills governing speed cameras, but Senate Bill 213 is unique in that it specifically addresses the traffic camera dealers who currently operate traffic cameras in Ohio. Currently, the Ohio Revised Code contains laws governing traffic enforcement, but no laws governing the camera manufacturers currently operating as for-profit businesses. We have no idea how many traffic cameras are in Ohio. Of those we were able to identify, the companies that operate these cameras are headquartered in Arizona, Georgia, Tennessee, Sweden, Germany, and Australia, with the majority located overseas. Note that none of these companies are headquartered in Ohio.

According to reports by the Ohio Department of Taxation, traffic cameras have collected \$67.6 million in fines from Ohio motorists in Fiscal Years 2020-2023. We have learned from city leadership and the traffic camera dealers themselves that the traffic camera dealers are currently receiving an average of 40% of the gross receipts from these fines. This means the out-of-state traffic camera dealers have taken nearly

\$30 million from Ohio motorists in FY 2020-2023. This number continues to climb each year these cameras are allowed to operate with virtually zero state oversight.

This bill creates a licensure for traffic camera dealers, with a per-camera fee of \$100,000 paid annually to the Department of Commerce. This bill also requires monthly calibration of these cameras by the Ohio Department of Public Safety to ensure they can accurately report a driver's speed. This comes at a \$5,000 monthly cost per camera. The State Highway Patrolmen calibrate their Speed Measuring Devices at the beginning of each shift, so we believe this monthly calibration requirement is a generous policy for the camera dealers. Finally, this bill assesses an 8% fee on the revenues going to the camera dealers, which would be directed to the Post Traumatic Stress Fund created by House Bill 308 in the 133rd General Assembly.

Opponents of this bill may suggest that speed cameras improve safety when there is no compelling evidence to support this. In fact, the handful of municipalities operating these cameras across the state rely on speeding violations and make no attempt to intervene. Simply stationing a police officer in a cruiser would be a visual deterrent to speeding and would allow the officer to intervene by pulling over speeding drivers and issuing tickets. Issuing tickets weeks after the violation does not improve safety, and it provides no opportunity to intervene the speeding driver's behavior. This is nothing more than a revenue generator for a handful of municipalities and foreign companies at the expense of thousands of Ohio drivers. We are attempting to reroute some of this revenue back to Ohio.

If these traffic camera companies are helping to enforce state laws, we simply ask that they are held to the same standards as licensed professionals. This past May, the members of this committee joined with the rest of the Senate and House to unanimously pass Senate Bill 114 to prohibit law enforcement ticket and arrest quotas because we believe law enforcement should never be used as a tool for generating revenue. If we truly believe that, we certainly don't want that revenue going out of the country to private companies without some degree of oversight.

Thank you once more, Chair Roegner and the members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. I welcome any questions from the committee at this time.